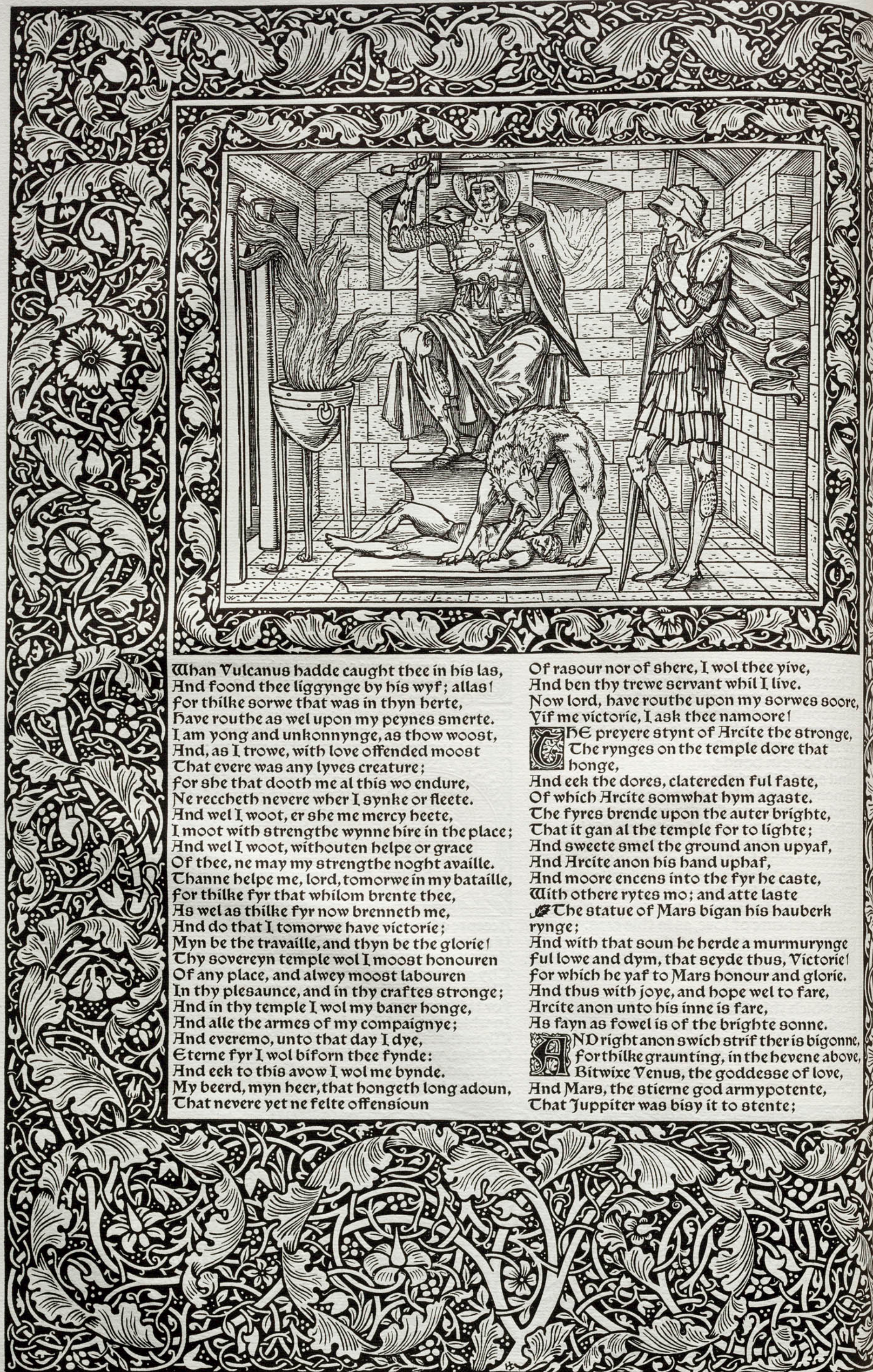




When Vulcanus hadde caught thee in his las,
And found thee liggynge by his wyf; alas!
For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
Have routhe as wel upon my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonnyng, as thou woost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended moost
That ever was any lyves creature;
For she that dooth me al this wo endure,
Ne reccheth nevere wher I synke or fleete.
And wel I woot, er she me mercy heete,
I moot with strengthe wyne hire in the place;
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
Thanne helpe me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
For thilke fyr that whilom brente thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me,
And do that I to-morwe have victorie;
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!
Thy sovereyn temple wol I moost honouren
Of any place, and alwey moost labouren
In thy plesaunce, and in thy craftes stronge;
And in thy temple I wol my baner honge,
And alle the armes of my compaignye;
And everemo, unto that day I dye,
Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee fynde:
And eek to this avow I wol me bynde.
My beerd, myn heer, that hongeth long adoun,
That nevere yet ne felte offensoun

Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
And ben thy trewe servant whil I live.
Now lord, have routhe upon my sorwes soore,
Yif me victorie, I ask thee namoore!
The preyere stynt of Arcite the stronge,
The rynges on the temple dore that
honge,
And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
Of which Arcite somewhat hym agaste.
The fyres brende upon the auter brighte,
That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
And sweete smel the ground anon upaf,
And Arcite anon his hand uphaf,
And moore encens into the fyr he caste,
With othere rytes mo; and atte laste
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk
rynge;
And with that soun he herde a murmuringe
ful lowe and dym, that seyde thus, Victorie!
For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inne is fare,
As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.
And right anon swich strif ther is bigonne.
For thilke graunting, in the hevne above,
Bitwixe Venus, the goddessse of love,
And Mars, the stierne god armypotent,
That Juppiter was biis i to stente;

Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so manye of aventure olde,
Found in his olde experience an art,
That he ful soone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is seyde, elde hath gret advantage;
In elde is bothe wysdom and usage;
Men may the olde atrenne, and noght atrede.
Saturne anon, to stynten strif and drede,
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this strif he gan remedie fynde.

My deere doghter Venus, quod Saturne,
My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
Hath moore power than woot any man.
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte;
The murmure, and the cherles rebellynge,
The groynyng, and the pryve empoysonyng;
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
While I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
Myn is the ruyn of the hye halles,
The fallynge of the toures and of the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpenter.
I slow Sampson in shakynge the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
My lookyng is the fader of pestilence.
Now weepe namoore, I shal doon diligence
That Palamon, that is thyn owene knyght,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Though Mars shal helpe his knyght, yet natheles
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
Al be ye noght of o compleccioun,
That causeth al day swich divisoun.
I am thyn aiel, redy at thy wille;
Weep now namoore, I wol thy lust fulfille.

Now wol I stynten of the goddess above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddessse of love,
And telle yow, as pleynly as I kan,
The grete effect, for which that I bygan.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.

REET was the feeste in At-
thenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of
that May
Made every wight to been in
such plesaunce,
That al that Monday justen
they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus
heigh servyse;

But, by the cause that they sholde ryse
Early, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wenten they at nyght.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan spryng,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateryng
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute,
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, upon steedes and palfreys.
Ther maystow seen devisyng of harneys
So unkouth and so riche, and wrought so weel
Of goldsmithrye, of browdyng, and of steel;
The sheeldes bright, testres, and trappures;

Gold/hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote/armures;
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
Knyghtes of retenue, and eek squieres
Naillyng the speres, and helmes bokelyng;
Giggynge of sheeldes, with layneres lacyng;
Ther as nede is, they weren nothyng ydel;
The fomy steedes on the golden brydel
Gnawynge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer, prikyng to and fro;
Yemen on foote, and communes many oon,
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
Pyres, trompes, nakers, and clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes.
The paleys ful of peples up and down,
Heere thre, ther ten, holdyng hir questioun,
Dyvynyng of thise Thebane knyghtes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with hym with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke
herd;

Somme seyde he looked grymme and he wolde
fichte,
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle ful of divynyng
Longe after that the sonne gan to spryng.

The grete Theseus, that of his sleepe awaked
With mynstralcie & noyse that was maked,
Heeld yet the chambre of his paleys riche,
Til that the Thebane knyghtes, bothe yliche
Honoured, were into the paleys fet.
Duc Theseus was at a wyndow set,
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
The peple preesseth thiderward ful soone
Hym for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
And eek to herkne his beste and his sentence.
An heraud on a scaffold made an hoo!
Til at the noyse of peple was ydo;

And whan he saugh the noyse of peple al stille,
Tho shewed he the myghty dukes wille.

The lord hath of his heigh discreccioun
Considered, that it were destruccioun
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;
Wherfore, to shapen that they shal nat dye,
He wolde his firste purpos modifye.

No man therfore, up payne of los of lyf,
No maner shot, ne polax, ne short knyf
Into the lystes sende, ne thider bryng;
Ne short sward, for to stoke with poynt bityng,
No man ne drawe, ne bere by his syde,
Ne no man shal unto his felawe ryde
But o cours, with a sharpe ygrounde spere;
foyne, if hym list, on foote, hymself to were.
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be brought unto the stake
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde,
But thider he shal by force, and there abyde.
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
On outhir syde, or elles sleen his make,
No lenger shal the turneyng laste.
God spede you! gooth forth, and ley on faste!
With long sward & with mace fighteth youre fille.
Gooth now youre wey; this is the lordes wille.

The
Knyghtes
Tale